

The Paradigm Shift in Hospital Administration by Health Services Management Graduates

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1. Health Administration

ABSTRACT

Background: Hospital management and its functions play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of hospital care. Hospital managers require multiple competencies to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. There is a growing need to employ professional hospital managers, particularly those educated in Health Services Management. This study explores the paradigm shift of transitioning from traditional hospital management to management by Health Services Management graduates.

Methods: A qualitative case study was conducted at a hospital to understand the "why", "how", and "what" aspects of employing Health Services Management graduates as hospital managers. Purposive sampling was used to select 12 participants for semi-structured in-depth interviews. Data were collected and analyzed concurrently using thematic analysis with an inductive approach.

Results: Six main themes and 26 sub-themes were identified. The main themes included structural reforms, process reforms, organizational culture reforms, performance reforms, resource reforms, and consequences and results.

Conclusion: Transitioning from traditional managers to Health Services Management graduates is accompanied by reforms in hospital structures, processes, resources, culture, and performance. These reforms may lead to valuable outcomes such as increased patient and staff satisfaction and improved effectiveness of actions and activities. Further research is recommended to test this hypothesis in similar settings.

1. Introduction

Hospitals play a vital role in maintaining and promoting public health [1-4] while consuming a significant portion of healthcare resources [5]. Optimal hospital management requires new approaches and the training of efficient managers [3]. Hospital managers need various competencies to effectively perform planning, organizing, and directing functions [6]. Their performance is also influenced by organizational variables such as work environment, culture, support from senior

management, and compensation [7]. Effective hospital management can lead to improvements in organizational culture [8], staff empowerment and performance [9], service quality [10], safety [11], and overall efficiency and effectiveness [12].

One of the main reasons for hospital management issues is the lack of strong, capable managers with the necessary knowledge and experience to optimally utilize resources, satisfy staff and clients, and deliver high-quality services in a timely manner [13]. Poor managerial performance can result in treatment delays, disease progression, increased inpatient mortality, higher costs, and wasted resources [14]. Hospital managers should meet patients' needs and provide affordable, quality, and safe diagnostic, treatment, and rehabilitation services [1, 14] while possessing relevant skills to carry out their tasks efficiently [6].

In developed countries, hospital management has received significant attention, with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations considering the employment of Health Services Management graduates essential for developing mission and vision statements and accreditation programs [6]. These graduates are regarded as efficient, strategic forces in the healthcare system, contributing to increased efficiency, effectiveness, quality, quantity, and optimal resource utilization [15]. As healthcare services expand, the need for Health Services Management experts in all areas, especially hospital management, is vital for achieving maximum efficiency at minimum cost.

Several studies have shown that Health Services Management graduates outperform managers from other fields in various dimensions of managerial functions [6, 7, 16, 17]. A study by McKinsey and the London School of Economics found a strong correlation between professional hospital management and improved clinical and functional indicators, including lower patient mortality, higher satisfaction, and better financial performance [18]. Despite these benefits, the use of professional health care managers in low- and middle-income countries is not as common as in developed countries, largely depending on the context and healthcare management standards [19].

This study aims to provide in-depth evidence of the situation in hospitals that have experienced this management paradigm shift, as there is a lack of qualitative research addressing this change in hospital management in low-income developing countries. The findings are expected to demonstrate the capabilities of Health Services Management graduates in managing various aspects of hospital affairs.

2. Materials and Methods

A qualitative case study design was employed to determine the "why", "how", and "what" aspects of transitioning from traditional hospital management to management by Health Services Management graduates. This approach is useful for gaining a deep understanding of an issue, event, or phenomenon in its natural context [23]. Purposive sampling via the snowball method was used to select participants with the most knowledge and experience regarding the management style of Health Services Management graduates. Snowball sampling is suitable for case studies [24], especially those examining a case with a holistic and comprehensive view.

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Researchers conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 12 participants after obtaining informed consent. The demographic characteristics of the interviewees are presented in Table 1.

Topic guides for the interviews included warm-up questions, main questions, and sub-questions about improvements, changes, current situations, clinical and non-clinical indicators, and the performance of managers and consultants. Probing questions were asked based on the participants' responses to clarify concepts and deepen the interview process. Interviews lasted 40-50 minutes and were conducted until data saturation was reached. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, compared with the recorded audio, and coded to increase accuracy.

Data Analysis

Data were collected and analyzed concurrently using thematic analysis with an inductive approach in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and evaluation. Researchers read the transcripts repeatedly to familiarize themselves with the topic, gain participants' real views and opinions, and extract meaningful units. Initial codes were obtained based on the extracted meaningful units, and final codes were obtained by classifying and reviewing these initial codes. Key points of the interviewees' speeches, facial expressions, and non-verbal signs were recorded during the interview to confirm the content and were considered during transcription. Two authors conducted the analysis to enhance credibility.

3. Results

Six main themes and 26 sub-themes were identified in the paradigm shift of hospital management by Health Services Management graduates. The main themes included structural reforms, process reforms, organizational culture reforms, performance reforms, resource reforms, and consequences and results. Table 2 presents the themes, sub-themes, and codes obtained from the study.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the interviewees

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (%)
Sex	
Female	4 (33)
Male	8 (67)
Marital Status	
Married	10 (83)
Single	2 (17)
Managerial Experience (years)	
5-10	5 (42)
10-15	2 (17)
15-20	4 (33)
20-25	1 (8)

Faculty Member	
Yes	2 (17)
No	10 (83)

Table 2. Main themes and sub-themes of the study

Main themes	Sub-themes
Structural reforms	Standardization and accreditation, Improved physical space, Implementing clinical guidelines, Patient rights, Employing evening shift executive managers, The hospital head consultant
Resource reform	Human resources, Physical resources, Financial resources
Functional reforms	Improving efficiency, Improving productivity, Service development, Evaluation and monitoring
Process reforms	Process improvement, Decision-making process improvement, Purchasing process improvement
Organizational culture reforms	Participatory management, Scientific management, Employees' attitude change, Team building, Motivational interventions, Clarification, Effective communication
Consequences and results	Effectiveness of actions and activities, Staff satisfaction, Patient satisfaction

Structural reforms included standardization and accreditation, improvement of physical space, implementation of clinical guidelines, patient rights, and the employment of evening shift executive managers and hospital head consultants. Participants emphasized the importance of standardization, accreditation, and physical space improvements in enhancing staff performance, patient safety, and overall hospital functioning. The implementation of clinical guidelines was seen as a significant change, leading to reduced length of stay and rational use of drugs and resources. The employment of Health Services Management students as evening shift managers and consultants was an innovative approach to addressing hospital management challenges and providing continuous support to staff.

Resource reforms encompassed human resources, physical resources, and financial resources. The use of medical specialists, particularly in emergency departments, was a significant managerial strength that helped organize and specialize patient care. Managers also succeeded in empowering emergency department staff by employing skilled and experienced nurses. Physical resource reforms included the reconstruction of emergency departments and operating rooms, as well as the purchase of quality capital equipment. Financial resource reforms focused on appropriate allocation and justification of spending through proper budgeting and cost management.

Functional reforms included improving efficiency and productivity, service development, and evaluation and monitoring. Proper and timely evaluation of hospital performance and corrective measures were seen as essential for improving service quality, patient satisfaction, and health outcomes. Participants emphasized the importance of efficient resource utilization in creating economically viable

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Process reforms encompassed process improvement, purchasing process improvement, and decision-making process improvement. Participants highlighted the need for hospital managers to develop decision-making skills, use scientific evidence, and adopt rational and intuitive approaches to solve complex problems. Process improvements in various dimensions, such as patient admission and discharge, were seen as crucial for enhancing hospital performance

Organizational culture reforms included participatory management, scientific management, employees' attitude change, team building, motivational interventions, clarification, and effective communication. The introduction of participatory management through regular meetings between ward heads and the management team was a significant change that fostered awareness, involvement, and problem-solving among staff. The institutionalization of scientific management led to a systematic and holistic view among managers, with decisions and functions based on scientific principles and motion studies.

The management of Health Services Management graduates led to notable consequences and results, including increased patient satisfaction, effectiveness of actions and activities, and the creation of a positive image for the hospital in the community. The hospital received recognition for consumer rights protection and customer orientation, demonstrating the impact of the management paradigm shift.

4. Discussion

The use of professional managers in the public and private sectors helps improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in service delivery [14]. Hospitals, as the most important medical organizations, require appropriate managerial decisions to significantly impact performance [3]. Without applying scientific management principles, hospitals may fail to achieve their goals of improving community health [6]. This study explored the paradigm shift of hospital management by Health Services Management graduates, revealing several key reforms and their consequences.

Structural reforms, such as standardization, accreditation, and physical space improvements, played a valuable role in enhancing staff performance, patient safety, and overall hospital functioning [23-25]. The reconstruction of emergency departments was particularly significant in reducing the burden of problems and improving patient care [26]. The implementation of clinical guidelines was another crucial reform that led to reduced length of stay, rational use of drugs and resources, and standardized patient management [27, 28].

Resource reforms, including human, physical, and financial resources, were essential for improving hospital performance. The employment of medical specialists, particularly in emergency departments, helped organize and specialize patient care, reduce waiting times, and prepare for future admissions [29, 30]. Physical resource reforms, such as the reconstruction of emergency departments and operating rooms and the purchase of quality equipment, contributed to increased productivity and

improved patient care [31, 32]. Financial resource reforms focused on appropriate allocation and justification of spending through proper budgeting and cost management [33].

Functional reforms, including improving efficiency and productivity, service development, and evaluation and monitoring, were crucial for enhancing hospital performance. Proper and timely evaluation of hospital performance and corrective measures were seen as essential for improving service quality, patient satisfaction, and health outcomes [33, 34]. Participants emphasized the importance of efficient resource utilization in creating economically viable hospitals and achieving health goals [35].

Process reforms, such as process improvement, purchasing process improvement, and decision-making process improvement, were significant for enhancing hospital performance. Participants highlighted the need for hospital managers to develop decision-making skills, use scientific evidence, and adopt rational and intuitive approaches to solve complex problems [36-38]. Process improvements in various dimensions, such as patient admission and discharge, were seen as crucial for enhancing hospital performance.

Organizational culture reforms, including participatory management, scientific management, employees' attitude change, team building, motivational interventions, clarification, and effective communication, were essential for fostering a positive and productive work environment. The introduction of participatory management through regular meetings between ward heads and the management team was a significant change that fostered awareness, involvement, and problem-solving among staff [39]. The institutionalization of scientific management led to a systematic and holistic view among managers, with decisions and functions based on scientific principles and motion studies [6].

The management of Health Services Management graduates led to notable consequences and results, including increased patient satisfaction, effectiveness of actions and activities, and the creation of a positive image for the hospital in the community. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have shown the positive impact of professional healthcare managers on hospital performance [7, 18].

5. Conclusion

The transition from traditional hospital management to management by Health Services Management graduates is accompanied by reforms in hospital structures, processes, resources, culture, and performance. These reforms may lead to valuable outcomes such as increased patient and staff satisfaction and improved effectiveness of actions and activities. Further research is recommended to test this hypothesis in similar settings and explore the long-term impact of this management paradigm shift on hospital performance and healthcare delivery.

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